



Writing from Experience and in Response to Text

This instructional model asks children to write in response to read-aloud texts with themes that address grade-level expectations in other subjects. Here, we've selected texts that address social studies and character education expectations. If your students find this helpful, you can re-use the 11-step process to write your own variations using texts that address any standards you're working on. Students will benefit most when this instructional model is embedded in a healthy process-writing program.

Why go this route?

- Because students need more than “opportunities to write.” They need direct instruction, scaffolding feedback and published authors to emulate.
- Because comprehension, writing and conversation skills don't have to wait for reading skill—they can be learned in response to oral text as well, and this can HELP reading fluency.
- Because using writing to think about other subjects “kills two expectations with one stone.”

You'll know you've arrived when...

- Teachers are using Read-Alouds as literary models for student writing.
- Teachers are modeling writing, correction and revision.
- Teachers are conferencing individually with writers.
- Teachers are assessing student work against standards and saving work and assessment in a cumulative portfolio for each student.
- Teachers are collaborating at grade level to analyze student work.

Construction Zone

It's About TIME


- Working through this sequence of instruction—modelling, practicing, peer editing, and conferencing—will require daily instruction periods of 45-60 minutes for 1-2 days/weeks.
- Revisiting the sequence four times/year (Nov., Jan., March and May) will reinforce the skills, apply them to different themes and texts, and allow assessment of cumulative progress.

Potential COSTS

- Two or three trade books can be purchased if your basal does not have suitable stories (\$10-\$20).
- Classroom equipment such as flipcharts and an overhead projector will help, but are optional.
- There may be a cost for copying the grade-level guide and selected loose inserts for each teacher undertaking this instructional model.

The Process

*A step-by-step guide
to using writing in response
to text to address other
Grade Level Content
Expectations (GLCE)*

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

- 1 Choose a theme** or use the prototype theme for your grade level.
We offer a starter-set of prototype lessons ready-to-use for Grades K-3 in this packet. Each is built around a theme that allows instruction about a social studies or character education expectation. Within each grade-level prototype, INSERT for Step 1 identifies applicable Grade Level Content Expectations. If the model proves useful, you can apply it to your own themes to address standards and expectations your district requires or that your students need.
- 2 Select four related texts.**
INSERT for Step 2 (in each grade-level prototype) recommends text selections that are found in common basals. These selections are also available as trade books.
- 3 Set aside enough time.**
INSERT for Step 3 is a worksheet that asks when (over a 1-2 week period) you can set aside 45–60 minutes of daily instruction time to work through Steps 4–11.
- 4 Ask the children to make a connection to their own lives.**
INSERT for Step 4 guides you through introducing the theme and helping children explore it in relation to their own lives. From this exploration, invite them to write (or draw) their connections. Use “Picture Walk” or “Read-Aloud” techniques (see loose inserts) with your first text selection.
- 5 Model writing expectations** by writing an essay yourself while thinking aloud.
Use an overhead projector or a flip chart so students can see you add, cross-out, re-think and chain ideas. INSERT for Step 5 guides you through. Save your product for editing in Step 7.
- 6 Have students draft stories** based on the theme.
- 7 Model correction and revision** using the teacher draft from Step 5.
INSERT for Step 7 offers a checklist of revisions from which to choose a focus.
- 8 Facilitate peer response** and hold writing conferences to offer teacher consultation about the student drafts.
Learning how to give feedback teaches speaking skills. INSERTS for Step 8 suggests questions and forms for both student and teacher responses.
- 9 Read aloud and ask students to respond.**
Read aloud a second text connected to the theme. Next use higher-level questions to lead a discussion and give students time to write. Use an “author chair” to have students read their writing and guide them in giving each other specific feedback. See Insert for Step 9.
- 10 Deepen understanding** with cross-text comparisons.
Work through a third and fourth text one at a time. Then use worksheets suggested in INSERT for Step 10 to guide students through making cross-text comparisons.
- 11 Assess learning results** against Michigan’s MLPP rubric for your grade level.
Save products and assessments for individual students, and aggregate classroom-level results for collaborative discussion with fellow teachers. INSERTS A-D for Step 11 lead you through several elements of this work.

Getting more mileage from using writing in response to text

How using writing to address other standards benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- Reading and writing skills are among the fundamental student achievements states are required to measure. Demonstrating progress toward helping ALL children learn is the cornerstone of making Adequate Yearly Progress. This instructional model is a systematic way to guide each child's writing and assess it individually so instruction can respond to remaining needs.

Education YES!

- Using writing and reading/listening as part of instruction about science or social studies texts is a powerful way to accomplish two Grade-Level Content Expectations at once.



Resources

Books

Classroom Instruction

That Works

**Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering,
Jane Pollock. ASCD, Alexandria, VA.
(2001)**

The authors examine decades of research findings to distill nine proven strategies.

Scaffolding Young Writers— A Writers' Workshop Approach

**Linda J. Dorn and Carla Soffos.
Stenhouse Publishing (2001)**

Linking assessment to instruction, the authors present a detailed plan for implementing a writers' workshop in grades K-3.

Experiment with Fiction

Donald Graves. Heinemann. (1989)

Children reading and writing narrative fictional stories should be part of every literate classroom. The author guides teachers and children through this process.

Mosaic of Thought

**Ellin Keene, Susan Zimmermann.
Heinemann (1997)**

Suggests classroom comprehension strategies that will help students use processes to deeply understand what they have read.

People

Specialists

Most Intermediate School Districts have a specialist working with schools on writing, reading and speaking in their service areas.

Coaches

The *Alliance for Building Capacity in Schools* website lists coaches whose training has been provided by Michigan State University and supported by the Michigan Department of Education. Some are experienced in school improvement implementation in Michigan schools. Please visit:

www.abcscoaches.org

Primary Author for this MI-Map Packet

Gale Sharpe
Partner Educator
Michigan Department of Education

Special thanks for thoughtful suggestions from Bonnie Rockafellow and from Lansing and Grand Rapids teachers.

MI-Map Coordinator/Editor

Joann Neuroth
Changing Horses
neurothj@aol.com

For more information, contact

Office of School Improvement
Michigan Department of Education
517/241-4285

Michigan State Board of Education

Kathleen N. Straus, President
Herbert S. Moyer, Vice President
Carolyn L. Curtin, Secretary
John C. Austin, Treasurer
Marianne Yared McGuire, NASBE Delegate
Elizabeth W. Bauer
Reginald M. Turner
Eileen Lappin Weiser

Ex-Officio

Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor
Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Superintendent of Public Instruction

Compliance With Federal Law

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education.